

Dunne, Cynthia

*PH  
Open Listening 2-22-13*

**From:** Furlow, Andrea  
**Sent:** Friday, February 22, 2013 8:26 AM  
**To:** Gaeuser; gaemail; Davis, Nolan; Dunne, Cynthia; Fisher, Edward  
**Subject:** FW: Email to GAE - Beautiful Connecticut Waltz  
**Attachments:** Joe Leggo Bio Info.pdf  
  
**Importance:** High

Dear Senator Musto, Representative Jutila and members of the GAE committee:

Thank you so much for raising our bill for a public hearing today - HB 5290, An Act Establishing "Beautiful Connecticut Waltz" As The Second State Song.

The idea for this bill came from our constituent, Joe Leggo, of Newington. Mr. Leggo was born in 1926 and started writing music and playing a guitar at the age of 10. He loved country music, and at age 12, he wrote a song called Rose of Roses, which was copyrighted and published 10 years later.

After serving our country in the Navy in the 40's, Mr. Leggo continued to write and perform and also was very interested in baseball. He moved to Connecticut in 1947 and tried out for the Hartford Chiefs. Although he didn't make it, he stayed in Connecticut, where he met his wife, Eleanor, in 1948. And In 1949, he wrote "Beautiful Connecticut Waltz" for her.

Over the years, Mr. Leggo continued to write and perform numerous country music songs. He has had his songs recorded by other artists and was inducted into the CCMA Country Music Hall of Fame in 2002. In addition, he was awarded a Gold Record in 2003 by Airplay International Country Music for his CD album, "Always Country" based on world-wide radio airplay.

The link to "Beautiful Connecticut Waltz" is below. The music video for the song was put together after we introduced the original bill in 2011 (Proposed Bill 5880) to establish "Beautiful Connecticut Waltz" as the State Waltz. This video depicts much of Connecticut's picturesque countryside to Mr. Leggo's song. It has received thousands of hits on the internet and continues to be viewed almost daily throughout the world.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7P5MDpVZXUA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7P5MDpVZXUA)

We have attached additional information on Mr. Leggo's accomplishments and history over the years. He is a truly gifted musician, as well as an outstanding community volunteer for his home town of Newington. In addition, he will be accompanied at the hearing today by his grandson, Michael Bafundo, who is following in his grandfather's footsteps and has already gained recognition in New York and beyond as an accomplished jazz and blues musician.

Thank you once again for your consideration of HB 5290, An Act Establishing "Beautiful Connecticut Waltz" As The Second State Song – it is truly appreciated!

State Senator Paul Doyle and State Representative Sandy Nafis

Hello Sandy

I hope you and your family had a nice Holiday. The Netherlands is putting together their new compilation CD with 14 top country artists. They send these to 50 or so top radio stations in different countries. I will be on it with the song "Beautiful Connecticut Waltz"

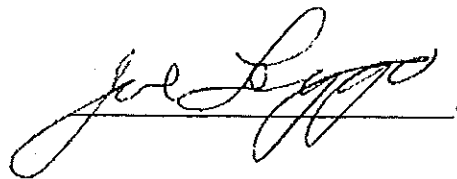
New Zealand has been playing it very often. Sending you a copy of their playlist for Dec 25<sup>th</sup>.

As I mentioned to you, many states have a second state song. An example is Tennessee. Waltz and Rocky Top in Tennessee. And Colorado added Rocky Mountain High by John Denver to their Second State song.

I came to Ct, in 1947 and wrote the song 1949. Many people told me it would be a great State song. It took a long time in doing so. But thought I would give it a try.

Many countries are playing it and it is on my Gold Record CD Album I received in 2003. An album of 14 songs I had written and recorded.

Thanks for your efforts Sandy.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joe Lipp", written over a horizontal line.

HIGHLITES OF JOE LEGGO      BMI SONGWRITER

AWARDED GOLD RECORD BY AIRPLAY INTERNATIONAL  
COUNTRY MUSIC FOR 'ALWAYS COUNTRY" CD ALBUM  
IN 2003 BASED ON WORLDWIDE RADIO AIRPLAY

NOMINATED FOR 2 AWARDS IN NASHVILLE 2003 2004  
BY INTERNATIONAL COUNTRY MUSIC KING EAGLE FOR.  
ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT AND SONG WRITER.

PERFORMED 3 SONGS I WROTE AT THE NASHVILLE KING EAGLE  
AWARD SHOW 2004.

"ALWAYS COUNTRY" ALBUM RATED (4) STARS BY  
INTERNATIONAL COUNTRY MUSIC. 14 SONGS ALL WRITTEN  
AND PERFORMED BY JOE LEGGO

CO-WROTE 6 SONGS WITH THE LATE SHORTY COOK OF THE  
DOWN HOMERS IN THE EARLY 50'S

HAD MY SONGS RECORDED ON DECCA, KING AND STARDUST  
RECORDS BY OTHER ARTISTS.

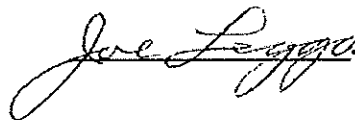
INDUCTED INTO CCMA COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME 2002

MY SONG "TOMHICKEN PICKER" MADE TOP 20 ON THE CHARTS  
TCMRADIO INTERNET OCT. 2005.

MY SONG "MADE FOR ME" WAS CCMA TRADITIONAL SONG OF  
YEAR 2003, "QUICKSANDS OF LOVE" RECORDING OF YEAR 2005

STARTED WRITING SONGS AT AGE 12.

ALWAYS COUNTRY JOE LEGGO

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joe Leggo". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the printed name "JOE LEGGO".

## ***Joe Leggo - Biography***

### **The Beginning**

Born February 4, 1926 in McAdoo, PA to my parents Anna and Joseph Leggo. The family moved to Beaver Meadows when I was 4 years old. My father worked in the anthracite coalmines in Coxville for 32 years. His wages were \$6.00 a day and there were 8 children to support. We would pick wild blueberries in the mountains to help supplement his pay by selling them in the afternoons. When school started the boys would pick coal from the slate banks bringing it home by wagon. The girl's job was to crack the coal to chestnut size pieces for our use. Later on the Coal Company forced my father to buy at least one ton of coal from them or he would lose his job.

### **Interest in Music**

At about the age of 10 I loved the sound of a guitar and country music. My cousin had a guitar his mother had bought for him but he lacked the interest in playing. I persuaded my mother to buy it for me and she did for \$5.00. I would strum and sing and learned a few chords from my neighbor, George Petcock. There was very little country music played on the radio. Whenever I heard a song I liked, I would have my sister Rita take it down in shorthand and transpose it for me, in fact I still have those copies of those old songs. Whenever we had to give a summary of a book we read in school, I asked the teacher if I printed and rhymed it, could I do it in two pages. She agreed and I started writing songs.

### **Start of Song Writing**

The first song I wrote was 'Yodelin Hobo' and I created a yodel very similar to the style of Wilf Carter (Montana Slim). The second song I wrote at 12 years of age was 'Rose of Roses'. It was copyrighted and published ten years later. I learned a lot more in playing and singing with my good friends Harry Hinkle and the Late Willie Klimkosky. We would play until the wee hours of the morning and benefit from a lot of enjoyment and a great deal of experience.

### **Call to Service**

After Graduating from Hazleton High School in 1943, I enlisted in the Navy at the age of 17. I took my basic training at Sampson New York and then went to gunnery school in Virginia. Upon completion I was assigned to the USAT Excelsior which was a troop ship which was converted from a freighter. We carried troops to Ireland, Scotland and England and made 6 trips across the Atlantic during wartime. We participated in the second wave of the 'D Day' invasion, which needless to say was a very memorable experience. I then went back to advance gunnery school and made petty officer, second class. I was assigned to the 'Esso New Haven' which was a tanker hauling crude oil from South America. It was very scary since we had no escorts and the German subs were just laying and waiting.

### **My Ambitions in Life**

I loved Baseball and we played one or two games everyday after berry picking. We learned to play with no gloves at most positions and we would re-tape the balls when the cover came off. The bats were nailed together and taped and we managed with what we had. My ambition was to be a major league ball player or a country songwriter and performer. After the war I went to Hartford, CT. where I had a tryout with the Hartford Chiefs. They were affiliated with the then Boston Braves. My position was outfield and catcher. I hit the ball well but lacked throwing and running having been inactive in sports during the three years in the service. They recommended that I join a border league in Texas, but I decided not to go.

To this day I still love Baseball and I am the Treasurer for the "World Series Club" in Connecticut. I was an active member of the Newington Little League and managed a team for 30 years.

### **Meeting My Lovely Wife**

I was working at Veeder Root at that time and was laid off due to a lack of work. I noticed an ad that was advertising Refrigeration School in 1948. I enrolled under the GI Bill of Rights. Shortly after, I met my wife Eleanor at a local dance and walked her home that night. I courted her for one year and we were married May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1949. I graduated from 'New England Technical School' and got a job with Marsden and Wasserman, a refrigeration and heating wholesale supply company.

### **Meeting the "Down Homers"**

In 1951 I would go to the "WTIC" Radio Station during my lunch hour to watch and listen to "The Down Homers". They were a very talented country group and had 15-minute program weekdays at noon. I got to be friends with their owner; Shorty Cooke and we began writing some songs together. "Dawn Music Co." published the song 'Landslide of Love' and Mervin Shiner on Decca Records and the late Clyde Moody on King Records then recorded it in 1952. The song did very well in the New England and Pennsylvania areas. It was listed #6 in Cashbox Magazine and appeared in the "Country Song Roundup Book Edition". My good friend Cousin Johnny Small gave it a lot of airplay.

### **A Blow in Song Writing**

My publisher, Bill Hayes of Dawn Music suggested I write a sequel to "Landslide of Love" and I did. The song was "Fire and Water" and Hank Snow was interested in recording it. We were very excited about it. He then changed his mind. His next release was "Between Fire and Water". It was a big let down since he took the idea and added one word to the title. Legally we could do nothing about it since the tune and words were different. I did not write any songs for a couple years after that.

### **Refrigeration / Air Conditioning Teaching and Organizations**

I was one of a panel of 3 people to lay out the HVAC (Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration) course for the State of Connecticut Technical Schools. In 1965, Stanley Killeen, CL&P Trade Cooperation Manager got together with staff members of the Bureau of Vocational-Technical Schools. CL&P was aggressively promoting the use of central air conditioning throughout its service area and was concerned about the availability of properly trained service personnel. They launched a program that would include refrigeration and air conditioning in five of the fourteen state Vo-Tech schools starting in the fall of 1966. This would be an evening program for adult education. A committee of three qualified air conditioning instructors was selected. I was selected for A. I. Prince Technical School and I was the Manager of Marco Refrigeration at that time. Along with Robert Ryan of Wilcox Technical School and Al Blomberg of Eli Whitney Technical School, we put the program in place. I became an evening instructor in 1967 and taught 2 - 3 nights per week. By January 1967, a planned expansion would include all 14 regional technical schools in the state.

It was very successful and one year later the panel was asked to set up a program for day school which would consist of grades 10, 11 and 12. It took 2 years to complete and the first school in the State of Connecticut was Oliver Wolcott Technical School. Each year after the initial program began it was put into 2 other schools and in time 10 of the 14 schools was offering this program.

In 1971 I was contacted by TCI "Technical Careers Institute" to put together an outline for two private schools. This was completed and the school still exists under the name of Baron Technical Institute. I have been in the refrigeration, air conditioning and heating business for 52 years. I have been teaching evenings for 20 years and presently teach at Cheney Technical School. I am currently a member of the State of Connecticut Heating, Piping and Cooling Examining Board for the Department of Consumer Protection and have been a member for the past 4 years.

I am certified by the RSES "Refrigeration Service Engineer Society" and also as a member serve as the Educational Chairman for the Central Connecticut Chapter. I was recently honored for 50 years of service in RSES.

For the past 10 years I have held the title of CFC RSES proctor for the refrigeration certification for the EPA. I have certified approximately 800 trades people in that period of time.

### **Back to the Music**

The Down Homers split up in 1956 and left the area. Slim Cox their fiddle player remained and formed his band, "The Cowboy Caravan". Slim was a good friend of mine and he recently passed away in 1999. I resumed writing and did some occasional guest appearances. I decided to record some of my songs and with the help of Jeff and Margie McKee I did. They left the area and I made contact with Troy Slocomb of Paramount Recording in Springfield, Massachusetts. He worked with me to produce 2 CD's titled "Under Control" and "Always Country". Troy is very talented and I owe him a lot of thanks.

**Receive International Play**

My publisher, Bob Norman sent 3 tapes to Australia and they liked the songs very much. Peterco Co contacted me and requested I send 24 CD's for all Country Radio DJ's in Australia and New Zealand. I did and I am receiving great reviews by mail. The CD is getting a lot of airplay. Just recently I sent them a radio interview I had done at WNLC New London by Mike Zito. I am looking forward to releasing another CD soon.

I am a member of the "New England Country Music Historical Society" and a member of the CCMA "Connecticut Country Music Association". I am a BMI writer as well.

**My Inspiration to Writing**

My biggest inspiration is my wife, Eleanor. Other inspirations include my children and grandchildren. Both CD's are dedicated to my wife of 51 years and the song "My Beautiful Girl" was written for her.